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RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000315

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: FADHILA MEMBERS DISCUSS SOLUTION TO INSURGENCY

REF: BAGHDAD 275 AND 310

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD FOR  
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a February 1 meeting with PolCouns, Fadhila Party members Hassan al-Shamiri and Mohammed Ismael al-Khuzai argued that rebuilding Iraq's economy is key to ending the insurgency. Many insurgents join armed groups because they have no jobs and feel they have no future in the new Iraq, they argued. Once a government is formed, the government's first priority should be to tackle Iraq's rampant unemployment problem, al-Shamiri said. END SUMMARY.

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The Unemployed: Insurgents in Waiting  
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¶2. (C) Al-Shamiri told PolCouns that unemployment will be high on the list of priorities of the next government. Unemployment, he argued, feeds the insurgency. The insurgency, and militias, are supported by simple people who often lack jobs, al-Shamiri said. The next government must reach out and help create jobs for them. These people sometimes join the insurgency for the "amusement value," he said. Others join because people like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi reach out to them and convince them that joining him will lead them to paradise. This is especially convincing to young men with little hope of establishing a family.

¶3. (C) PolCouns said that to help jumpstart the economy and create jobs Iraq needs more foreign direct investment. Shamari cautioned that Iraq could not absorb quickly a major dose of economic reforms. Instead, the government should help build big factories to generate employment.

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Comment  
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¶4. (C) Our contacts' comments echo that of other Iraqi leaders, including Prime Minister Ibrahim Ja'fari (reflets). GOI officials, NGO heads, academics, and community leaders all argue that unemployment is crippling Iraq's efforts to move forward. It remains to be seen if the next Iraqi government will push through the necessary legislation and reforms to foster growth and stability.

¶5. (SBU) BIONOTE: Sheikh Hassan al-Shamiri graduated from Baghdad Law School in 1992. He then served in the army. Al-Shamiri went on to study with Ayatollah al-Yacoubi in Najaf for seven years before joining the Fadhila Party. Eventually, al-Shamiri says he wants to return to his religious studies and someday become an Ayatollah. Sheikh Hassan is a newly elected member of the Council of Representatives.

KHALILZAD